

again was simple: The law is working well, but it needs more funding to keep up with rising costs and a growing senior population. We must protect and expand funding for these important programs.

The simple fact is the amount of funding dedicated for these important programs is a disgrace. As a point of comparison, while funding for other programs has risen by 11 percent since 2009, Older Americans Act funding has dropped 7 percent over that same time. Funding for these crucial programs has not even kept up with inflation. That is why, for the past several years, I have led an appropriations request letter asking for a 12 percent increase in funding for the Older Americans Act. A 12 percent increase would make a meaningful difference for states struggling to provide services to their growing senior populations.

Some of the most important and well-known services funded by the Older Americans Act are the meals programs, often provided by Meals on Wheels. A Government Accountability Office, GAO, report I requested last year found that fewer than 10 percent of low-income seniors who needed a meal delivered to their homes in 2013 received one. The study also found that one in three low-income seniors are "food insecure," yet fewer than 5 percent receive a meal at home or at a senior center. That is unacceptable.

Investing in senior nutrition programs is not only the moral thing to do, it is the financially smart thing to do. Proper nutrition can keep people out of long-term care and emergency rooms. Meal delivery is also a good opportunity for visiting with an isolated senior who might otherwise go days without seeing another person.

Another critical OAA program is the Senior Community Service Employment Program, SCSEP, which provides job training and employment services for older adults. Seniors are matched with part-time jobs at organizations in the community and many times these positions turn into permanent employment, increasing seniors' financial security.

Senior centers are another important way the Older Americans Act supports the needs of seniors in our communities. The reauthorization includes some policy changes to modernize senior centers to help ensure people are taking part in activities like group meals, afternoon activities, and exercise classes.

Another crucial service I strongly hope receives full funding is the Senior Medicare Patrol Program, SMP, which helps protect seniors and their families from health care fraud, errors, and abuse. We have bipartisan agreement that this is an important, cost-saving program, and if Congress does not appropriate sufficient funding for SMP, then those funds should be distributed from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program so the program does not experience a cut.

I am pleased that this title II of this bill continues funding for several important resource and information centers, including the Pension Counseling Program and the National Education and Resource Center on Women and Retirement Planning. These programs serve older adults across the nation by providing much-needed information on pensions, retirement issues, and avoiding poverty and financial fraud.

The number of Americans age 60 and over will grow from about 65 million today to 92 million by 2030. Our most vulnerable populations need to see that we care and are here to serve and support them.

Funding must keep up with the increases we see in the cost of living for seniors, including housing, food, transportation, and prescription drugs. The Older Americans Act reauthorization had the unanimous consent of all Senate and House Members and committed to a 7 percent increase in funding over the next 3 years. I am hopeful my colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee will use their authority to continue to meet or exceed this funding goal for these critically important programs. I will continue to advocate strongly for these funding increases.

The truth is that the priorities we hold—treating seniors with respect, making sure seniors have the support they need—have the overwhelming support of the American people. These principles are among the foundations of a just and fair society where people look forward to growing old. I thank my Senate and House colleagues for their support of this important reauthorization bill and President Obama for signing it into law. I am pleased to recognize the anniversary of the passage of the Older Americans Act today.

95TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION ACT

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, July 9, 2016, marked the 95th anniversary of the enactment of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, legislation that has changed the lives of thousands of native Hawaiians in the State of Hawaii.

This legislation was made possible by the vision of Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaʻole.

After the annexation of Hawaii, Prince Kuhio continued to serve his people as Hawaii's second delegate in Congress.

When Prince Kuhio took office in 1902, he was determined to improve the lives of native Hawaiians. Although he served as a nonvoting delegate, he championed the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act to create a trust of nearly 200,000 acres of land that previously belonged to the monarchs of the Hawaiian Kingdom. By setting aside this land, Congress intended to ensure the livelihood of native Hawaiians, whose population had been reduced from as many as, according to some estimates, 800,000 prior to 1778 to a little over 20,000 by 1920.

In a letter that Prince Kuhio circulated to the Senate in 1920, he shared the results of an extensive investigation and survey that noted the exceedingly high mortality rate of native Hawaiians. The survey justified the need to return native Hawaiians to the land, to reconnect with their sense of place, and elevate their well-being by providing stable housing and opportunities to improve their livelihood. Prince Kuhio shepherded the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act through both the House and Senate, and President Warren Harding signed the bill into law on July 9, 1921.

In 1924, the first homestead in Kalamaula on the island of Molokai became home to 42 Native Hawaiians who began harvesting vegetables and raising animals to sell at local markets.

Today nearly 10,000 Native Hawaiian beneficiaries and their families live on agricultural, pastoral, or residential homestead lots in over 60 communities across Hawaii.

With Hawaii's admission into the Union in 1959, the State of Hawaii was tasked with administering the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, a responsibility primarily led by the State's Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. At the Federal level, Congress has continued to live up to its commitments to the Hawaiian community, first established by the HHCA, through continued funding for programs focused on planning, development, housing construction, and home loan programs to support the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands in its mission, as well as home loans and guarantees to support Hawaiian Homes beneficiaries.

On the 95th anniversary of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, we recognize and thank Prince Kuhio for his vision and sincere aloha for the well-being of Native Hawaiians.

The Hawaiian Homes Commission Act has made a difference in thousands of lives and set the foundation for acknowledging the trust relationship between the Native Hawaiian community and the Federal Government. Today the Federal Government continues this trust relationship by providing funds to support housing, health care, education, and other resources for the benefit of the Native Hawaiian community.

However, there is still much to be done to assist Hawaii's indigenous population. I will continue to work with Congress, the executive branch, the State of Hawaii, and the Native Hawaiian community to not only safeguard Prince Kuhio's landmark legislation and legacy, but to ensure it, and the community he worked so hard to assist, will continue to thrive.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, today I wish to honor MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, FL, during its 75th anniversary year.